

Chapter 6

Sources of Information to Assist Scenic & Historic Highway Sponsors

General information

Information to assist Scenic and Historic Highway sponsors will come from a multitude of sources. With DelDOT as the sponsor agency for the program, a Sponsor should start by contacting the DelDOT Scenic and Historic Highways Coordinator to receive all available program information. DelDOT staff will provide phone consultation to prospective Scenic and Historic Highway sponsors and assist with public involvement to the extent resources are available. If funding can be secured, DelDOT will provide training in public involvement and other skills needed to develop Corridor Plans.

Many other agencies and organizations will be able to assist Sponsors as well. Foremost among these is the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) through its publications referenced in Chapters 2 and 3, "Byway Beginnings: Understanding, Inventorying, and Evaluating a Byway's Intrinsic Qualities" and "Community Guide to Planning & Managing a Scenic Byway" and through its website at www.byways.org. The publications are available by calling FHWA's Scenic Byways Clearinghouse at 1-800-4byways and choosing extension #2. Other publications available include a map of National Scenic Byways and All American Roads.

Using the same 1-800-4byways phone number and choosing extension #5, a caller reaches the America's Byways Resource Center, a source of information for developing statewide scenic byways programs, and for byway sponsors seeking National Scenic Byway designation. Staff at the center are assigned to specific states, so ask for the staff person assigned to Delaware. The website includes a wealth of information for byway sponsors with the opportunity to "Ask an Expert" questions and links to many state scenic byway sites.

A list of the member organizations of Delaware's Scenic and Historic Highways Advisory Board is listed in the appendix. These groups have helped to shape the program and many have expertise that will be valuable in developing the Step 1 – Nomination Application and Step 2 – Corridor Plan Application. The FHWA publications mentioned above cite the types of information likely available in state level organizations for resource identification, resource protection and interpretive strategies, etc. Delaware's Office of Tourism staff will be able to inform Scenic and Historic Highway sponsors of current marketing efforts and evolving themes for future marketing that sponsors may want to use as a basis for interpretive efforts.

To help with your nomination and Corridor Plan efforts, the FHWA suggests that you consider recruiting community leaders who have experience in planning and organizing projects. Their expertise in grant writing, political maneuvering, project management, conflict resolution and other related skills may prove extremely useful.

Local, state, and federal government staff can be a considerable help, particularly those who work in the fields of transportation planning, resource conservation, economic development and tourism. Also colleges and state universities are likely to have individuals who can assist the Sponsor group in technical expertise (from departments of landscape architecture, architecture, planning, historic preservation, geography, history, natural resources, recreation planning, and government, for example).

You may also want to contact state and regional chapters of professional organizations, including the American Planning Association, and the American Society of Landscape

Architects, and environmental and preservation organizations like Scenic America, the Nature Conservancy, Trust for Public Land, the National Trust for Historic Preservation and Preservation Delaware.

Remember to involve business leaders in your efforts. These leaders may have limited time to spare, but if you use their time well, their ideas may be critical to the success of the overall scenic byway effort.

Funding

The passionate efforts of committed volunteers along with time devoted by state and local agency staff, will go a long way toward assembling the critical mass of effort needed to prepare a Step 1 – Nomination Application and Step 2 – Corridor Plan. However, some level of funding will likely be needed to complete these efforts. Creative partnering is a good first step toward securing needed resources, both expertise and financial. Many suggestions are made in the previous section of this chapter. While some of your partners may be familiar with funding sources from government programs, others may know foundation sources interested in collaborative and positive outcomes likely from a scenic byway planning and implementation process. Still others, particularly business leaders, may know of corporate sources willing to sponsor your effort.

Once a route has received state Scenic and Historic Highway designation as a result of approval of the Step 1 – Nomination Application, it is eligible for federal funding for corridor planning from the FHWA. Federal grants are available on a competitive basis with applications due generally about June 1 of each year. DelDOT's Scenic and Historic Highways Coordinator will have complete information available on this funding. The byways.org website includes a list of activities eligible for funds, listings of grants awarded in past years, and an application for future grant awards. There is a matching requirement of 20% for the federal funds awarded.

Cooperative efforts with neighboring states

The nearby states of Maryland and New Jersey have particularly active scenic byways programs and are interested in byway proposals that might cross state lines. For example, the Underground Railroad, an important theme in Delaware's history, is also being interpreted as part of Maryland's Chesapeake Country Byway. You may wish to contact the state scenic byways coordinators for these states to discuss possible partnership opportunities. DelDOT's Scenic and Historic Highways Coordinator can provide you with contact information.